PART I. *Price 3s. 6d.*

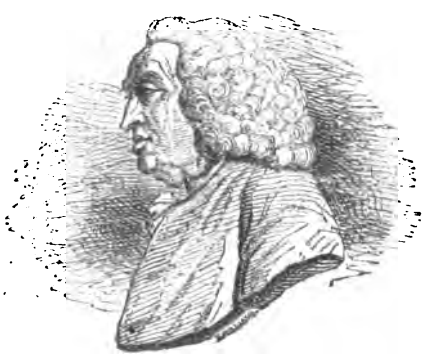
GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATIONS

OF THE

LIFE AND TIMES

OF

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.



LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
MDCCCXXXV.

Albemarle Street, May 1. 1835.

FROM the general approbation with which the new Variorum Edition of BOSWELL'S LIFE OF JOHNSON has been received, MR. MURRAY is encouraged to commence the monthly publication of a series of GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATIONS of a Work which the ablest writers have pronounced to be "a manual of amusement"—a "lively and faithful picture of the manners and literature of England"—and the "richest accumulation of wit, wisdom, and morals that any language can boast"——; which was considered by Sir Walter Scott to be, without exception, "THE BEST PARLOUR-WINDOW BOOK THAT EVER WAS WRITTEN." [See Preface, Vol. I. p. xvii.]

Each Part will contain at least five Engravings; consisting, generally, of *two* Portraits of distinguished individuals who occupy a prominent place in Boswell's Narrative; *one* Landscape Illustration of the actual localities of Dr. Johnson's life; and *two* Plates containing Fac-similes of the Autographs of his personal friends and contemporaries.

These Illustrations will be published in octavo, and also, for the convenience of collectors, in quarto. The price of the octavo edition will be Three Shillings and Sixpence the Part; and that of the quarto, Five Shillings.

A very limited number will be printed on India paper, price Seven Shillings and Sixpence.

MICHAEL JOHNSON.

OF LICHFIELD.

Father of Dr. Saml. Johnson.

Engraved by Sam. Murray, Albemarle Street 1858

MICHAEL JOHNSON;

FATHER OF SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

From an original Drawing, in the possession of Mr. MURRAY.

MICHAEL JOHNSON, bookseller, was born at Cubley in Derbyshire, in 1656, and died in Lichfield, of an inflammatory fever, at the age of seventy-six, in 1731. He was, according to his son, a pious and worthy man, but wrong-headed, positive, and "afflicted with *melancholy*," which was transmitted largely in his blood. In the Appendix to the first volume of Mr. Murray's variorum Edition of Boswell will be found such particulars of his history as were taken down by Mrs. Piozzi from the conversation of Dr. Johnson, or have been collected from other sources by the diligence of Mr. Croker.

Michael is said to have been "of still larger size and greater strength than his son, who was reckoned very like him." The portrait now given, and which has never before been engraved, shows certainly a striking resemblance to the features of Dr. Johnson; and the father's handwriting, also, though feebler, is very like that of his son.

The following is the title-page of one of Michael Johnson's Sale Catalogues, in Mr. Upcott's collection: —

"A Catalogue of choice books, in all faculties, divinity, history, travels, law, physic, mathematics, philosophy, poetry, &c., together with Bibles, common-prayers, shop-books, pocket-books, &c. Also fine French prints, for staircases and large chimney-pieces; maps, large and small. To be sold by Auction, or he who bids most, at the Talbot, in Sidbury, Worcester. The sale to begin on Friday the 21st of this instant March, 1717–18, exactly at six o'clock in the afternoon, and to continue till all be sold. Catalogues are given out at the place of sale, or by Michael Johnson of Lichfield."

On the back of the title-page is this characteristic Address: —

"To all Gentlemen, Ladies, and others, in and near Worcester: —

"I have had several auctions in your neighbourhood, as Gloucester, Tewkesbury, Evesham, &c. with success, and am now to address myself, and try my fortune with you.

"You must not wonder that I begin every day's sale with small and common books; the reason is, a room is some time a filling; and persons of address and business seldom coming first, they are entertainment till we are full: they are never the last books of the best kind of that sort, for ordinary families and young persons, &c. But in the body of the catalogue you will find law, mathematics, history; and for the learned in divinity, there are Drs. South, Taylor, Tillotson, Beveridge, Flavel, &c., the best of that kind: and to please the Ladies, I have added store of fine pictures and paper-hangings; and, by the way, I would desire them to take notice, that the pictures shall always be put up by the noon of that day they are to be sold, that they may be viewed by daylight.

"I have no more, but to wish you pleased, and myself a good sale, who am your humble servant,

"M. JOHNSON."

The subject of Michael Johnson's professional travels cannot be dismissed, without recalling to memory a touching and highly characteristic incident in the life of his illustrious son, which has been thus preserved by Mr. Warner, in his "Tour through the Northern Counties of England, 1802."

"During the *last visit* which the Doctor made to Lichfield, the friends with whom he was staying missed him one morning at the breakfast table. On inquiring after him of the servants, they understood he had set out off from Lichfield at a very early hour, without mentioning to any of the family whither he was going. The day passed without the return of the illustrious guest, and the party began to be very uneasy on his account; when, just before the supper-hour, the door opened, and the Doctor stalked into the room. A solemn silence of a few minutes ensued, nobody daring to inquire the cause of his absence, which was at length relieved by Johnson addressing the lady of the house in the following manner: 'Madam, I beg your pardon for the abruptness of my departure from your house this morning, but I was constrained to it by my conscience. Fifty years ago, madam, on this day, I committed a breach of filial piety, which has ever since lain heavy on my mind, and has not till this day been expiated. My father, you recollect, was a bookseller, and had long been in the habit of attending Uttoxeter market, and opening a stall for the sale of his books during that day. Confined to his bed by indisposition, he requested me, this time fifty years ago, to visit the market, and attend the stall in his place. But, madam, my pride prevented me from doing my duty, and I gave my father a refusal. To do away the sin of this disobedience, I this day went in a post-chaise to Uttoxeter, and going into the market at the time of high business, uncovered my head, and stood with it bare an hour before the stall which my father had formerly used, exposed to the sneers of the standers-by and the inclemency of the weather; a penance by which I trust I have propitiated Heaven for this only instance, I believe, of contumacy towards my father.'"

Dr. Johnson's *last visit* to his native town was in November, 1784; and he died on the 13th of the following month.

LETTER FROM GILBERT WALMESLEY, Esq.

TO THE

REV. JOHN COLSON, F.R.S.

From the original, in the possession of Mr. Upcott.

In the year 1737, Johnson, having nearly completed his Tragedy of Irene, came to the determination of giving up his little academy at Lichfield, and trying his fortune in London; and it is a memorable circumstance, that Garrick, who had been his pupil, accompanied him thither, with intent to complete his education, and follow the profession of the law; from which, however, he was soon diverted by his passion for the stage. "Both of them," says Mr. Boswell, "used to talk pleasantly of this their first journey to London. Garrick, evidently meaning to embellish a little, said one day in my hearing, 'We rode and tied.' And the Bishop of Killaloe informed me, that, at another time, when Johnson and Garrick were dining together in a pretty large company, Johnson humorously ascertaining the chronology of something, expressed himself thus:—'That was the year when I came to London with twopence halfpenny in my pocket.' *Garrick* overhearing him, exclaimed, 'Eh? what do you say? with twopence halfpenny in your pocket?'—*Johnson.* 'Why, yes; when I came with twopence halfpenny in *my* pocket, and thou, Davy, with three halfpence in *thine*.'"

Upon setting out from Lichfield, Garrick received from Gilbert Walmesley, Esq. the following letter of introduction to the Rev. John Colson, at that time first master of the free school at Rochester:—

"Lichfield, March 2. 1737.

"Dear Sir,

"I had the favour of yours, and am extremely obliged to you; but I cannot say I had a greater affection for you upon it than I had before, being long since so much endeared to you, as well by an early friendship, as by your many excellent and valuable qualifications; and, had I a son of my own, it would be my

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ambition, instead of sending him to the university, to dispose of him as this young gentleman is.

"He, and another neighbour of mine, one Mr. Johnson, set out this morning for London together. Davy Garrick to be with you early the next week, and Mr. Johnson to try his fate with a Tragedy, and to see to get himself employed in some translation, either from the Latin or the French. Johnson is a very good scholar and poet, and I have great hopes will turn out a fine tragedy-writer. If it should any way lie in your way, doubt not but you would be ready to recommend and assist your countryman.

"I am ever, Dear Sir,

"Your most affectionate humble Servant,

"G. WALMESLEY."

Gilbert Walmesley was Registrar of the Ecclesiastical Court at Lichfield; where he died, August 3. 1751; and a monument to his memory has been erected in that Cathedral, with an inscription from the pen of Mr. Seward, one of the Prebendaries.

The letter to Mr. Colson, to whose academy at Rochester Garrick went, does not appear to have proved beneficial to Johnson; but his gratitude was not the less on that account; and many years after Mr. Walmesley's death, he paid, in his life of Edmund Smith, the following beautiful tribute to the memory of his early friend: —

"Of Gilbert Walmesley, thus presented to my mind, let me indulge myself in the remembrance. I knew him very early; he was one of the first friends that literature procured me, and I hope that, at least, my gratitude made me worthy of his notice.

"He was of an advanced age, and I was only not a boy, yet he never received my notions with contempt. He was a Whig, with all the virulence and malevolence of his party; yet difference of opinion did not keep us apart. I honoured him, and he endured me.

"He had mingled with the gay world, without exemption from its vices or its follies; but had never neglected the cultivation of his mind. His belief of revelation was unshaken; his learning preserved his principles; he grew first regular, then pious. His studies had been so various, that I am not able to name a man of equal knowledge. His acquaintance with books was great, and what he did not immediately know, he could at least tell where to find. Such was his amplitude of learning, and such his copiousness of communication, that it may be doubted whether a day now passes, in which I have not some advantage from his friendship.

"At this man's table I enjoyed many cheerful and instructive hours, with companions such as are not often found — with one who has lengthened and one who has gladdened life; — with Dr. James, whose skill in physic will be long remembered; and with David Garrick, whom I hoped to have gratified with this character of our common friend. But what are the hopes of man! I am disappointed by that stroke of death, which has eclipsed the gaiety of nations, and impoverished the public stock of harmless pleasure."

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Sept 27 Sun 1750

Your humble servt
E Cave

St John's Gate

Founder of the Gentleman's Magazine

London, Published by John Murray, 1855.

LICHFIELD.

THE BIRTH-PLACE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

From a Drawing made on the spot, in 1835, by CLARKSON STANFIELD, R. A.

"JOHNSON," says Boswell, "ever retained a warm affection for his native city;" and the following article in his Dictionary has been often referred to as containing a very characteristic indication of this feeling:—"LICH. *n. s.* a dead carcass; whence *lichwake*, the time or act of watching by the dead; *lichgate*, the gate through which the dead are carried to the grave; *Lichfield*, the field of the dead, a city of Staffordshire, so named from martyred Christians. *Salve, magna parens!*"

This tradition has been adopted by Drayton, in his Poly-Olbion:

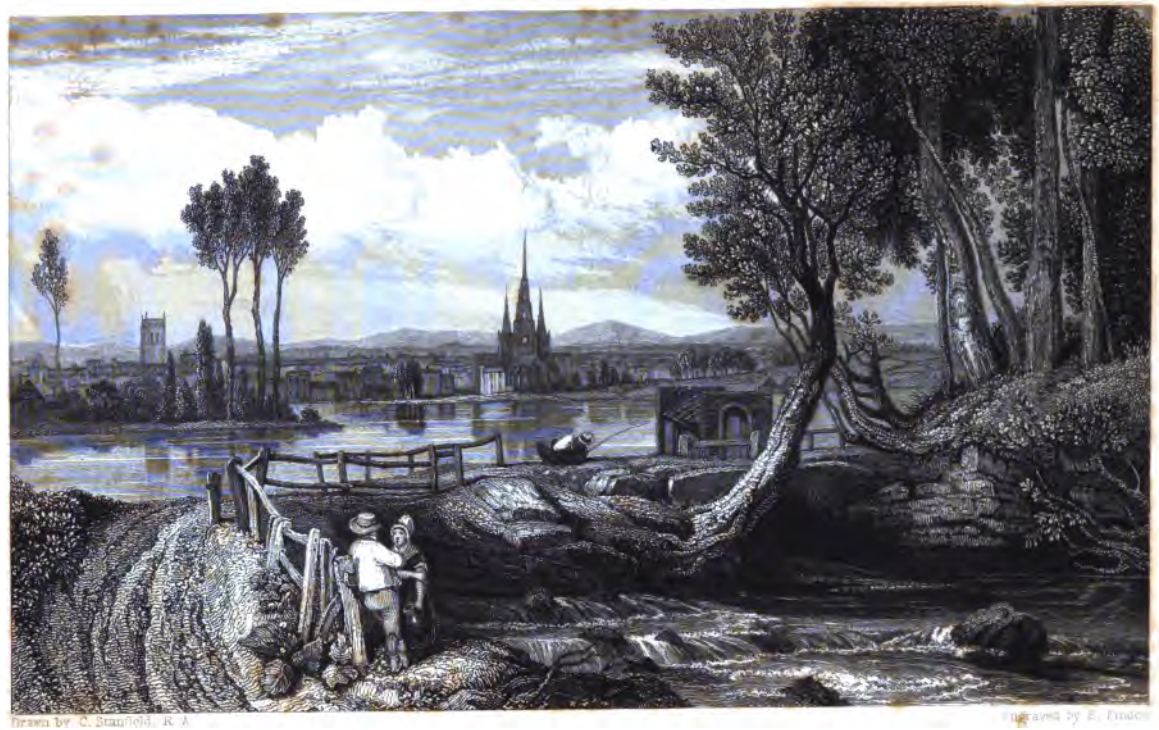
> "A thousand other saints whom Amphibal had taught,
> Flying the Pagan foe, their lives that strictly sought,
> Were slain where *Lichfield* is, whose name doth rightly sound
> There of these Christians slain, *dead field* or burying ground."

Stukely, however, rejects the story, and renders *Lich*, a morass.

Among many other distinguished characters born in the native city of JOHNSON, may be mentioned Elias Ashmole, the founder of the noble museum at Oxford; Dr. Smalridge; Dr. Thomas Newton, Bishop of Bristol; and Johnson's own pupil, fellow-adventurer, and friend, DAVID GARRICK.

Mr. Nichols says, "Of his birth-place Johnson always spoke with a laudable enthusiasm: 'its inhabitants,' he said, 'were more orthodox in their religion, more pure in their language, and more polite in their manners, than those of any other town in the kingdom;'" and he often lamented, that "no city of equal antiquity and

worth had been so destitute of a native to record its fame, and transmit its history to posterity." In the year 1795, however, there appeared, "A History of the City and County of Lichfield," and also "A History of the Antiquities of the Cathedral of Lichfield, by John Jackson, Esq.;" and there followed, in 1806, "The History and Antiquities of the Church and City of Lichfield, containing its ancient and present State, Civil and Ecclesiastical: by the Rev. Thomas Harwood," in one volume quarto; to which work we refer the reader for accurate and interesting information respecting the birth-place of JOHNSON.



Drawn by C. Stanfield, R.A. Engraved by E. Finden

View of Lichfield

The birth place of Mr. Samuel Johnson.

London, Published by John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1838.

EDWARD CAVE,

PROJECTOR AND PUBLISHER OF THE GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE.

EDWARD CAVE, as the first bookseller who had the good sense to discover Johnson's talents and acquirements, and who employed and befriended him at the moment when such assistance was most needful, is often mentioned in Boswell's Narrative, where several of his letters are also preserved. In Nichols's Literary Anecdotes, vol. v., the reader will find various minute particulars of his professional career; but the following tribute to his memory, from the pen of Dr. Johnson, which appeared originally in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1754, will be sufficient for our present purpose: —

"Edward Cave was born at Newton, in Warwickshire, February 29. 1691. His father was the youngest son of Mr. Edward Cave, of Cave's in the Hole, a lone house on the Street Road in the same county, which took its name from the occupier; but, having concurred with his elder brother in cutting off the entail of a small hereditary estate, by which act it was lost from the family, he was reduced to follow, in Rugby, the trade of a shoemaker. He was a man of good reputation in his narrow circle, and remarkable for strength and rustic intrepidity. He lived to a great age, and was in his latter years supported by his son.

"It was fortunate for Edward Cave, that, having a disposition to literary attainments, he was not cut off by the poverty of his parents from opportunities of cultivating his faculties. The school of Rugby, in which he had, by the rules of its foundation, a right to be instructed, was then in high reputation, under the Rev. Mr. Holyock, to whose care most of the neighbouring families, even of the highest rank, entrusted their sons. He had judgment to discover, and, for some time, generosity to encourage, the genius of young Cave; and was so well pleased with his quick progress in the school, that he declared his resolution to breed him for the University, and recommend him as a servitor to some of his scholars of high rank. But prosperity which depends upon the caprice of others is of short duration. Cave's superiority in literature exalted him to an invidious familiarity with boys who were far above him in rank and expectations; and, as in unequal associations it always happens, whatever unlucky prank was played was imputed to Cave. When any mischief, great or small, was done, though perhaps others boasted of the stratagem when it was successful, yet, upon detection or miscarriage, the fault was sure to fall upon poor Cave.

"At last his mistress, by some invisible means, lost a favourite cock. Cave was with little examination stigmatised as the thief or murderer; not because he was more apparently criminal than others, but because he was more easily reached

by vindictive justice. From that time Mr. Holyock withdrew his kindness visibly from him, and treated him with harshness, which the crime in its utmost aggravation could scarcely deserve, and which surely he would have forborne, had he considered how hardly the habitual influence of birth and fortune is resisted; and how frequently men, not wholly without sense of virtue, are betrayed to acts more atrocious than the robbery of a hen-roost, by a desire of pleasing their superiors.

"Those reflections his master never made, or made without effect; for, under pretence that Cave obstructed the discipline of the school, by selling clandestine assistance, and supplying exercises to idlers, he was oppressed with unreasonable tasks, that there might be an opportunity of quarrelling with his failure; and when his diligence had surmounted them, no regard was paid to the performance. Cave bore this persecution for a while; and then left the school, and the hope of a literary education, to seek some other means of gaining a livelihood.

"He was first placed with a Collector of the Excise. He used to recount with some pleasure a journey or two which he rode with him as his clerk, and relate the victories that he had gained over the exciseman in grammatical disputations. But the insolence of his mistress, who employed him in servile drudgery, quickly disgusted him; and he went up to London in quest of more suitable employment.

"He was recommended to a timber-merchant at the Bank Side, and, while he was there on liking, is said to have given hopes of great mercantile abilities. But this place he soon left, I know not for what reason, and was bound apprentice to Mr. Collins, a printer of some reputation, and deputy alderman.

"This was a trade for which men were formerly qualified by a literary education, and which was pleasing to Cave, because it furnished some employment for his scholastic attainments. Here, therefore, he resolved to settle, though his master and mistress lived in perpetual discord, and their house could be no comfortable habitation. From the inconveniences of these domestic tumults he was soon released, having in only two years attained so much skill in his art, and gained so much the confidence of his master, that he was sent without any superintendent to conduct a printing-house at Norwich, and publish a weekly paper. In this undertaking he met with some opposition, which produced a public controversy, and procured young Cave reputation as a writer.

"His master died before his apprenticeship was expired; and, as he was not able to bear the perverseness of his mistress, he quitted her house upon a stipulated allowance, and married a young widow, with whom he lived at Bow. When his apprenticeship was over, he worked as a journeyman at the printing-house of Mr. Barber, a man much distinguished and employed by the Tories, whose principles had at that time so much prevalence with Cave, that he was for some years a writer in 'Mist's Journal,' which (though he afterwards obtained, by his wife's interest, a small place in the Post Office) he for some time continued. But, as interest is powerful, and conversation, however mean, in time persuasive, he by degrees inclined to another party; in which, however, he was always moderate, though steady and determined.

"When he was admitted into the Post Office, he still continued, at his intervals of attendance, to exercise his trade, or to employ himself with some typographical business. He corrected the 'Gradus ad Parnassum,' and was liberally rewarded by the Company of Stationers. He wrote an account of the Criminals, which had for some time a considerable sale; and published many little pamphlets that accident brought into his hands, of which it would be very difficult to recover the memory. By the correspondence which his place in the Post Office facilitated, he procured country newspapers, and sold their intelligence to a journalist of London for a guinea a week.

"He was afterwards raised to the office of Clerk of the Franks, in which he acted with great spirit and firmness: and often stopped franks which were given by Members of Parliament to their friends, because he thought such extension

of a peculiar right illegal. This raised many complaints; and having stopped, among others, a frank given to the old Duchess of Marlborough by Mr. Walter Plummer, he was cited before the House, as for breach of privilege, and accused, I suppose very unjustly, of opening letters to detect them. He was treated with great harshness and severity; but, declining their questions by pleading his oath of secrecy, was at last dismissed. And it must be recorded to his honour, that, when he was ejected from his office, he did not think himself discharged from his trust, but continued to refuse to his nearest friends any information about the management of the office.

"By this constancy of diligence, and diversification of employment, he in time collected a sum sufficient for the purchase of a small printing-office, and began *The Gentleman's Magazine*, a periodical pamphlet, of which the scheme is known wherever the English language is spoken. To this undertaking he owed the affluence in which he passed the last twenty years of his life, and the fortune which he left behind him, which, though large, had been yet larger, had he not rashly and wantonly impaired it by innumerable projects, of which I know not that ever one succeeded.

"Mr. Cave, when he formed the project, was far from expecting the success which he found; and others had so little prospect of its consequence, that, though he had for several year talked of his plan among printers and booksellers, none of them thought it worth the trial. That they were not restrained by their virtue from the execution of another man's design, was sufficiently apparent as soon as that design began to be gainful; for in a few years a multitude of magazines arose, and perished: only *The London Magazine*, supported by a powerful association of booksellers, and circulated with all the art and all the cunning of trade, exempted itself from the general fate of Cave's invaders, and obtained, though not an equal, yet a considerable sale.

"Cave now began to aspire to popularity; and, being a greater lover of poetry than any other art, he sometimes offered subjects for poems, and proposed prizes for the best performances. The first prize was fifty pounds, for which, being but newly acquainted with wealth, and thinking the influence of fifty pounds extremely great, he expected the first authors of the kingdom to appear as competitors; and offered the allotment of the prize to the Universities. But, when the time came, no name was seen among the writers that had been ever seen before; the Universities and several private men rejected the province of assigning the prize. At all this Mr. Cave wondered for a while; but his natural judgment, and a wider acquaintance with the world, soon cured him of his astonishment, as of many other prejudices and errors. Nor have many men been seen raised by accident or industry to sudden riches, that retained less of the meanness of their former state.

"He continued to improve his Magazine, and had the satisfaction of seeing its success proportionate to his diligence, till in the year 1751 his wife died of an asthma; with which, though he seemed not at first much affected, yet in a few days he lost his sleep and his appetite; and, lingering two years, fell, by drinking acid liquors, into a diarrhœa, and afterwards into a kind of lethargic insensibility, in which one of the last acts of reason he exerted, was fondly to press the hand that is now writing this little narrative. He died January 10. 1754, æt. 63.

"He was a man of large stature, not only tall but bulky, and was, when young, of remarkable strength and activity. He was generally healthful, and capable of much labour and long application; but in the latter years of his life was afflicted with the gout, which he endeavoured to cure or alleviate by a total abstinence both from strong liquors and animal food. From animal food he abstained about four years, and from strong liquors much longer; but the gout continued unconquered, perhaps unabated.

"His resolution and perseverance were very uncommon: whatever he undertook, neither expense nor fatigue were able to repress him; but his constancy

was calm, and, to those who did not know him, appeared faint and languid; but he always went forward, though he moved slowly.

"The same chillness of mind was observable in his conversation; he was watching the minutest accent of those whom he disgusted by seeming inattention; and his visitant was surprised when he came a second time, by preparations to execute the scheme which he supposed never to have been heard.

"He was, consistently with his general tranquillity of mind, a tenacious maintainer, though not a clamorous demander, of his right. In his youth, having summoned his fellow-journeymen to concert measures against the oppression of their masters, he mounted a kind of rostrum, and harangued them so efficaciously, that they determined to resist all future invasions. And when the Stamp Officers demanded to stamp the last half-sheet of the Magazines, Mr. Cave alone defeated their claim, to which the proprietors of the rival Magazines would meanly have submitted.

"He was a friend rather easy and constant, than zealous and active; yet many instances might be given, where both his money and his diligence were employed liberally for others. His enmity was, in like mannér, cool and deliberate; but, though cool, it was not insidious, and though deliberate, not pertinacious.

"His mental faculties were slow; he saw little at a time, but that little he saw with great exactness. He was long in finding the right, but seldom failed to find it at last. His affections were not easily gained, and his opinion not quickly discovered. His reserve, as it might hide his faults, concealed his virtues; but such he was, as they who best knew him have most lamented."

Sir

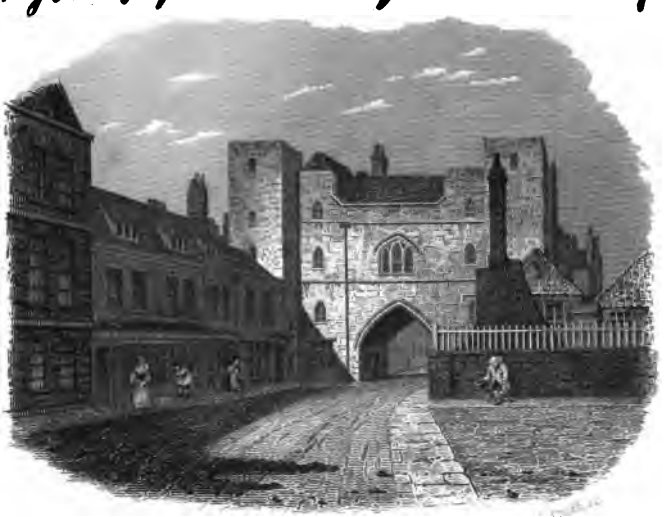
I sent to Mr Oswald for ye first Volume of ye Archbishop's Works, and had obtained an abridgment of his Life in order to put it in ye magazine; but lost it ye Day after, and therefore must defer it till ye october magazine. You mention not Barnet Archbp of Glasgow's Christian name; wch I should chuse to know. I am

Sir

your humble Servt

Edwd Cave

St John's Gate 22 7br 1747



St John's Gate

The Residence of Edw. Cave, Printer

Published by John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1826.

LETTER FROM EDWARD CAVE;

WITH A VIEW OF ST. JOHN'S GATE, CLERKENWELL.

In the collection of Mr. Upcott.

St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell, where Cave resided, is the only relique of a once extensive and magnificent priory of the heroic Knights of the order of St. John of Jerusalem, which was suppressed, at the dissolution of the monastic-houses, by King Henry VIII., in 1540, and has been destroyed, all but this interesting fragment, by successive dilapidations. The last prior, Sir William Weston, though the King had allowed him to retire on what was then a very large pension, viz., 1000*l.* per annum, died of a broken heart the very day that the establishment was dissolved. Dr. Johnson, according to Boswell, said, that when he first saw St. John's Gate "he beheld it with reverence," as the place where the Gentleman's Magazine was published; and Boswell adds, "I suppose every young author has had the same feeling for the periodical publication which has first entertained him, and in which he has first had an opportunity of seeing himself in print, without the risk of expressing his name." Mr. Croker, however, says, "The Gentleman's Magazine had been at this time but six years before the public, and its contents were, until Johnson himself contributed to improve it, entitled to any thing rather than *reverence:* it is much more probable that Johnson's *reverence* was excited by the recollections connected with the ancient gate itself."

From his close intimacy with Cave, Johnson was much at St. John's Gate, and taught Garrick the way thither. Cave having been told by Johnson, that his friend had talents for the theatre, and was come to London with a view to the profession of an actor, expressed a wish to see him in some comic character: Garrick readily complied; and, as Cave himself told Sir John Hawkins, with a little preparation of

the room over the great arch of St. John's Gate, and, with the assistance of a few journeymen printers, who were called together for the purpose of reading the other parts, represented, with all the graces of comic humour, the principal character in Fielding's farce of the Mock Doctor.

The following striking proof of Johnson's extreme indigence, six years after he published his "London," and very soon after his "Life of Savage" had issued from the press, has been preserved by Walter Harte, the author of the Life of Gustavus Adolphus: —

"Soon after Savage's Life was published, Mr. Harte dined with Edward Cave, and occasionally praised it. Soon after, meeting him, Cave said, "You made a man very happy t'other day." "How could that be?" says Harte. "Nobody was there but ourselves." Cave answered, by reminding him, that a plate of victuals was sent behind a screen, which was to Johnson, dressed so shabbily, that he did not choose to appear; but, on hearing the conversation, he was highly delighted with the encomiums on his book."

Extract of a letter from Dr Johnson to Mr Cave, 1758.

Sir

I did not care to detain your Servant while I wrote an answer to your letter, in which you seem to apprehend that I had promised more than I am ready to perform. If I have raised your Expectations by any thing that may have escaped my memory I am sorry, and if you remind me of it shall thank you for the favour. If I made fewer alterations than usual in the debates it was only because there appeared, and still appears to me to be less need of Alteration. As to Father Paul, I have not yet been just to my proposal, but have met with impediments which I hope, and now at an end, and if you find the Progress hereafter not such as you have a right to expect you can easily stimulate a negligent Translator. I am Sir

Your humble Servant

Sam: Johnson

Wednesday.

To Mr Cave at

St John's Gate

Facsimile Printed by John Murray Albemarle Street, 1858

LETTER FROM JOHNSON TO CAVE.

From the original, in the possession of Mr. Urcott.

This is a fac-simile of a portion of the following letter from Johnson to Cave, written in August or September, 1738; when the author was employed on the Parliamentary Debates for the Gentleman's Magazine, and on a translation of Father Paul Sarpis's celebrated History of the Council of Trent.

"Wednesday.

"Sir,

"I did not care to detain your servant while I wrote an answer to your letter, in which you seem to insinuate that I had promised more than I am ready to perform. If I have raised your expectations by any thing that may have escaped my memory, I am sorry; and if you remind me of it, shall thank you for the favour. If I made fewer alterations than usual in the Debates, it was only because there appeared, and still appears to be, less need of alteration. The verses to Lady Firebrace may be had when you please, for you know that such a subject neither deserves much thought nor requires it.

"The Chinese Stories may be had folded down when you please to send, in which I do not recollect that you desired any alterations to be made.

"An answer to another query I am very willing to write, and had consulted with you about it last night, if there had been time; for I think it the most proper way of inviting such a correspondence as may be an advantage to the paper, not a load upon it.

"As to the Prize Verses, a backwardness to determine their degrees of merit is not peculiar to me. You may, if you please, still have what I can say; but I shall engage with little spirit in an affair, which I shall *hardly* end to my own satisfaction, and *certainly* not to the satisfaction of the parties concerned.

"As to Father Paul, I have not yet been just to my proposal, but have met with impediments, which, I hope, are now at an end; and if you find the progress hereafter not such as you have a right to expect, you can easily stimulate a negligent translator.

"If any or all of these have contributed to your discontent, I will endeavour to remove it; and desire you to propose the question to which you wish for an answer.

"I am, Sir, your humble servant,

"*To Mr. Cave, St. John's Gate.*" "Sam. Johnson."

Some sheets of this translation were printed off, but the design was dropt; "for it happened oddly enough," says Boswell, "that

another person of the name of Samuel Johnson, librarian of St. Martin's in the Fields, and curate of that parish, engaged in the same undertaking, and was patronized by the clergy, particularly by Dr. Pearce, afterwards Bishop of Rochester. Several light skirmishes passed between the rival translators, in the newspapers of the day; and the consequence was that they destroyed each other, for neither of them went on with the work. It is much to be regretted, that the able performance of that celebrated genius Fra Paolo, lost the advantage of being incorporated into British literature by the masterly hand of Johnson."

Albemarle Street, June 1. 1835.

This day is published, price Five Shillings,

THE FOURTH VOLUME

OF

MR. MURRAY'S COMPLETE AND IMPROVED EDITION OF

BOSWELL'S LIFE

OF

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL. D.

INCLUDING

THE JOURNAL OF THE TOUR TO THE HEBRIDES;

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

ANECDOTES AND ANNOTATIONS

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and from
MR. UPCOTT'S MSS.

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**** Part II. will be published on the 1st of July.*